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THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, MARCH, 1861.

Sketchings.

DOMESTIC ART GOSSIP.

NEW YORK.—The Exhibition of the National Academy of Design opens on the 20th inst. It promises to be an unusually interesting one.

Since the completion of the Diamond Palace, which was duly noticed in the CRAYON, we have not felt courage to examine the business buildings as they rise up in their ponderous proportions in Broadway and elsewhere. The fact is, we felt discouraged, both on account of the fine opportunity lost in the erection of that building, and on account of the most disinterested and intelligent criticism lavished upon that production of art by the daily press. It is true that we never pass by the corner of Broadway and White street—that is, the southeast corner—without realizing the fact that architecture is not clearly understood by its professors, unless Mr. Astor really proposed to erect the ugliest building on Broadway by way of advertisement for his future tenants. It is just possible that is the motive, because if, as the papers stated, Ball, Black & Co.'s store is the "finest, most magnificent and stupendous" edifice in New York, as rich a man as Mr. Astor would look out for a design, the ugliest imaginable. Mr. Astor has succeeded.

It is quite a relief, under the circumstances, to find that on the corner of Broadway and Grand street (now we mean the southwest corner), there has been erected during the past winter, a store some 48 feet in front by 112 feet in depth, which may be counted among the most creditable productions of architectural art. The architect, Mr. John W. Ritch, evidently *thought* upon his subject when he designed it. There is a successful effort at grouping, a broad and forcible treatment, depth of openings and expression of detail but rarely met with in buildings of this kind. We admire the courage of Mr. Ritch in eschewing the candel-mold columns, now all the rage on our principal thoroughfare, where two or three stories are adroitly forced into one, as though a gutta percha building had been originally but two stories high, and then had been drawn upward to make room for a few stories more. Is not Mr. Ritch fearful of losing his reputation as an artist by confessing that his new store is five stories high? Let him beware and not trifle with the latest American styles of store architecture!

The works of Geo. H. Hall, now in Seville, are thus spoken of in two of the Spanish papers, published in that city:

Notable pictures—"Are without doubt two canvasses painted in oil, exhibited to the public in the establishment situated opposite the Calle de St. Acasio: we can say that the artist has translated thereon two magnificent bunches of white and purple grapes of the country. All the precision and knowledge of chiaroscuro and truth imaginable, are, we observe, united in the portrayal of the simple objects

mentioned; the study and execution could not be improved upon. . . . (Here follows for half a column censure on the artists of Seville for not doing better.) We hope that in future, stimulated by these two little pictures, the artists of Seville will more frequently present their works that they may obtain the eulogium they undoubtedly merit, and not let it be said that the art of painting has died out in Seville."—*La Discusion, Seville, Nov. 6, 1860.*

"We recommend to the lovers of the art of Murillo to visit the well-known establishment of Muxart, in which they will be able to admire two pictures, which, for some days past, have with justice claimed the attention of connoisseurs. The fruit pieces, which are the paintings we refer to, represent two magnificent bunches of grapes; it is impossible to ask a greater approximation in the works of man to the creation of nature; the pencil has performed this with great dexterity and incomparable truth. The transparency which permits us to see the fibres of the grapes, the happy effect of the coloring and the mastery with which the pictures are touched, reveal in the author, Mr. Hall, from North America, a consummate artist."—*La Andalusia, Nov. 4, 1860.*

WASHINGTON.—In spite of the hard times we are happy to learn that the fine arts are "holding their own" in Washington City. A very beautiful building is rapidly approaching completion on Pennsylvania Avenue, upon the front of which are the interesting words—"Dedicated to Art." The style of the architecture is allied to that of the new wings of the Louvre; it has cost at least one hundred thousand dollars, and the noble man who is erecting it is William W. Corcoran, Esq. What his particular ideas are in regard to its final arrangement, we are not yet informed. One thing, however, we believe is settled, and that is, the collection of pictures and statuary which has heretofore attracted many visitors to Mr. Corcoran's residence, is to be deposited in the new edifice as a beginning. This collection, which has recently been catalogued by Charles Lanman, Esq., is said to contain first-rate specimens of many leading American artists, as well as some good European paintings.

On the 5th of February, Dr. Horatio Stone threw open his studio to the public, when the first view was obtained of his statue of Hancock, executed by order of Congress, and intended, we believe, to occupy a position in the Chamber of the United States Senate. We hear it spoken of as an admirable production.

Among the American artists now prosecuting their studies in Europe, is Mr. Charles Shoemaker, of Georgetown, District of Columbia.

BOSTON.—Our artists are all busy, and have many fine pictures on their easels. Gerry has just finished a large landscape, which contains some masterly tree painting and brilliant coloring. In Ames' studio we notice two female heads, painted with great power. Gay has just sent to Everett's a fine mountain picture, and Griggs has at the same place a sparkling coast subject, one of the Nahant beaches. Frost sends two river views, and Bricher a very fine lake picture.

The Athenæum exhibition opens in March with a fine collection of pictures by Boston and New York artists, under the superintendence of Mr. Ordway; when open, we will send some notes of it.

The Art Club has had several meetings with reference

to a revision of its constitution, and have voted to hire a suite of rooms in the new Studio building, suitable for exhibition of pictures, reading room, etc. It was also voted, we learn, to change the name of the club to the Allston Club.

We have to record this month the death of two Boston artists. Mr. H. P. Hunt, who died very suddenly at Paris, where he was studying his profession, and Mr. P. Stephenson, the sculptor, who died in Boston. His most elaborate and best work is the Wounded Indian, now here in the rooms of the Mercantile Library, which institution purchased it some years since.

In relation to the late Mr. Peter Stephenson, the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser says:

At a very early age, young Peter displayed the germ of the future sculptor. At about the age of fifteen, he commenced cutting cameo portraits. Having attained quite a reputation here in the line of cameo cutting, he left for Boston, where his great skill procured him abundance of orders, and from his savings he was enabled to attain the darling object of his ambition, a voyage to Italy. After his return, he established his studio permanently at Boston, about which time he produced a very classic design for a Perry monument, to be erected in this city. His celebrated bust of Daniel Webster was also executed at about this date. His greatest work, "The Wounded Indian," of life size, fully established his reputation as a first-class sculptor. This work, after being exhibited at the great Art exposition, Crystal Palace, London, and in numerous cities of the continent, finally became the property of the Boston Athenæum. There are in this city, his cabinet size sculptures of "Paul and Virginia," a bust of the late Wm. H. Mason, Esq., and his "Psyche," owned by Geo. Truscott, Esq. The early demise of Peter Stephenson will leave a void in both the social and art circle in which he moved, not easily to be filled.

CHICAGO.—In a collection of works of art at this place, to be distributed on Art-union principles, there are several of Volk's performances. The Chicago Tribune mentions a statuette of Washington represented as "when he hacked his father's favorite pear-tree. He stands, hatchet in hand, beside the pear tree, which bears the marks of his depredations, and the unnerved arm and slightly drooped head, with the shade of thought on the face, reveal the consciousness of wrongdoing, with its probable consequences, which has stolen over him." There is a bust of Randolph Rogers, the sculptor, modelled in Rome in 1856, a portrait bust of a lady, a statue of a child, a case of cameos and cabinet busts of Mr. Douglas and Mr. Lincoln.

BROOKLYN.—An association has been established in this place called the "Brooklyn Art Association," of which Mr. Regis Gignoux is *President*, J. A. Oertel, *Vice President*, F. A. Chapman *Treasurer* and J. Williamson *Secretary*. All the usual projects for the encouragement of art are under the supervision of this society. The Reception (one of the most important of its objects), which took place on the 28th ult. in the new Academy of Music, passed off with marked éclat, the building itself being one of the most admired of the works of art presented to the visitors.

PHILADELPHIA.—See advertisement of the Penn. Academy.

Literary Record.

PERSONAL HISTORY OF LORD BACON, from unpublished papers. By William Hepworth Dixon. Ticknor & Fields, Boston.

This work can scarcely be called a personal history of Lord Bacon, but rather a refutation of some of the charges that have prevailed against his character. Why Bacon should need a defender is more than we can understand. He must have required one or Mr. Dixon would not have written this book. Let us accept it as an illustration to the mysteries of progress, and credit the advocate with good intentions. There seem to be intellectual courts where the good and the bad are tried alike; every rare spirit, like Christ, has his Pontius Pilate; happy those who escape crucifixion! Bacon's age was his Pilate, and it gave him up to the rabble of his own time, led by the lawyer Coke. Let us be thankful that as time goes on new judges appear to reverse old decisions!

There are several romantic incidents exploded in this volume; for instance, Bacon's ingratitude to Essex, the reputed love of Queen Elizabeth for Essex, and the story of the ring; the Peacham case, Bacon's mercenary nature, etc., all of which curious readers will find carefully examined by Mr. Dixon. Most of these stories have been circulated on poetical authority. Poetry has done much mischief in the world. We do not wonder that *Fiction*, one of the departments of poetic art, is so aptly termed; most of its material being but too often of a libellous instead of an artistic character. That Poetry seizes on contrasts without regard to truth, is verified by Pope, in calling Bacon "The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind." Mr. Dixon says that "fools have grinned and rogues have rubbed their palms for more than a hundred years" over this line; but he says truly that it has "never yet been recognized by honest hearts."

There are many suggestive circumstances chronicled in this work. Should there be any husband desirous of knowing how a wise, learned and patient man treats a troublesome mother-in-law, let him study the conduct of Bacon in this particular. If there be any observers of men and things who are puzzled to account for public patronage, a characteristic anecdote told by a worthy bishop, throws some light on the subject. As it is short, and, moreover of architectural import, we copy it:

"I did once intend," says the bishop, "to have built a church, and a lawyer in my neighborhood did intend to build himself a fair house, as afterward he did. One sent unto him (the lawyer) to desire him to accept from him all his timber; another sent unto him to desire him that he might supply him with all the iron that he spent about his house. These men had great woods and iron-mills of their own. The country desired him to accept of their carriage. What reason had this man not to build? Truly I think he paid very little but the workman's wages. Whereas, on the contrary, in the building of my church—when it was so necessary, for without the church they had not God's service and no church was near them for nearly four or five